



work with your local chapter of the Autism Society of America or other autism or disability support groups to develop partnerships, offer basic training on autism, and assist victim assistance organizations in developing and enhancing services for individuals with ASD and other disabilities.



**Improving the Lives
of All Affected
by Autism.**

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If you appreciated the information contained in this publication, please consider offering support through a donation that will continue the availability of this information to others in need. Help us continue the work so vital to the autism community by making a tax-deductible donation at www.autism-society.org/supportasa.

RESOURCES

Crime Victim Organizations

Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice
1-800-851-3420 ~ www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/

National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC)
1-800-394-2255 ~ www.ncvc.org/

National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)
1-800-879-6682 ~ www.trynova.org/

Childhelp USA National Child Abuse Hotline
1-800-442-4453 ~ www.childhelp.org/

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-7233 ~ www.ndvh.org/

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
1-800-537-2238 ~ www.nrcdv.org/

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)
1-800-656-4673 ~ www.rainn.org/

Autism and Crime

Autism Society of America ~ 1-800-3AUTISM
www.autism-society.org/safeandsound

Find local resources for victims of crime at Autism Source™, ASA's on-line referral database
www.autismsource.org

Disability, Abuse & Personal Rights Project
www.disability-abuse.com

LEAN (Law Enforcement Awareness Network) on Us
www.leanonus.org

Autism Risk and Safety Management
www.autismriskmanagement.com/

If Your Loved One with Autism is the
VICTIM OF A CRIME



WHEN SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT WHO HAS AN AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) IS THE VICTIM OF A CRIME, IT IS EXTRAORDINARILY UPSETTING.

As frightening and unsettling as being a crime victim is, you are probably concerned that your loved one with ASD may have unique challenges in reporting the crime, receiving victim assistance, assisting with the prosecution of the perpetrator, and regaining a sense of normalcy to their life.

You should know, however, that your loved one has rights, and that today throughout the country, professionals who assist crime victims are gaining a better understanding of how to work with crime victims with disabilities, including autism. Because of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires governments and private businesses to be accessible to people with disabilities, and the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which enhances and expands direct services to victims of crime, greater attention is being paid to crime victims with all types of disabilities.

CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS

In most states, all victims of crime have specific rights that are outlined in a state's constitution, laws, and regulations. They typically include the following:

- **THE RIGHT** to be notified of all court proceedings related to the offense.
- **THE RIGHT** to be reasonably protected from the accused offender.
- **THE RIGHT** to have input at sentencing, usually in the form of a victim impact statement.
- **THE RIGHT** to information about the conviction, sentencing, imprisonment, and release of the offender.
- **THE RIGHT** to an order of restitution from the convicted offender.
- **THE RIGHT** to be notified of your rights.

If your loved one with ASD needs accommodations to understand and assert these rights, he or she has the right to necessary accommodations under the ADA and, if the agency or organization providing services receives federal funds, through Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act.

CRIME VICTIMS' SERVICES

In every state there are programs that provide services for crime victims. If you are unfamiliar with what resources are available to your loved one, you may want to contact your state's Victim Assistance Program. These programs address the crisis needs of victimized individuals and families by working with a network of community-based services. They may be able to assist your loved one through the availability of such services as a 24-hour Hotline, crisis intervention, shelter, individual and group counseling, abuser interventions, legal assistance, medical accompaniment, court accompaniment, and information and referral. Using the victim assistance network, the Victim Assistance Program will also try to assist you in finding victim assistance providers with some knowledge of autism. In many communities, especially those in rural areas, a victim assistance organization may want to partner with a disability organization to provide services to your loved one. Given that your loved one may have particular challenges in processing and communicating their experience, it is especially important to involve someone familiar with the autism spectrum.

In addition to assistance services, programs throughout the country also assist with compensation for crime victims by reimbursing them for expenses incurred as a result of a crime. Crimes covered include violent crimes such as, homicide,

rape, drunk driving, domestic violence, and child sexual abuse and neglect. Expenses covered include medical costs, mental health counseling, etc. Individuals with ASD may require specialized counseling and support services beyond the scope of those needed by a crime victim without a disability, and victim's compensation may be able to assist with the expense.

For assistance finding your state's Victim Assistance and Compensation Programs, call the federal Office for Victims of Crime at 1-800-851-3420 (TTY 1-877-712-9279). The Office for Victims of Crime also has an online resource directory available at www.ovc.gov/help/links.htm.

WORKING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The expertise of crime victim assistance organizations regarding autism spectrum disorders varies widely from community to community. As someone who cares about an individual with autism, you may wish to volunteer your time and knowledge to provide your local victim assistance organizations with a greater understanding of what autism is and how to best serve individuals on the spectrum. An individual's ability to move forward after being a crime victim, as well as the state's ability to prosecute the crime, may be dependent on professionals' knowledge of autism spectrum disorders. You may want to